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Prosecutor Karl Price fired for failing to apologize, take responsibility for derogatory comments

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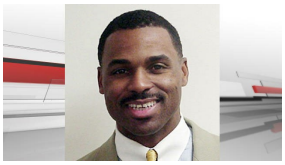
By Jason Riley CONNECT

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (WDRB) – Embattled prosecutor Karl Price has been fired after Jefferson County Attorney Mike O'Connell determined he failed to take responsibility and properly apologize for alleged inappropriate and derogatory comments he made about an Asian-American family and others.



O'Connell fired Price on Tuesday after earlier this month saying he would give Price a second chance if he would write a letter of apology and take full responsibility for "myriad instances" of "unprofessional and inappropriate" conduct, according to his termination letter.

O'Connell gave Price a deadline of mid-July but Price responded that he needed more time to review video of court hearings in which his comments were cited as being "mean-spirited" and "neither funny nor appropriate." Price was given until July 17.

Price wrote in a letter on July 17 that he had wanted to watch the videos of arraignment court to see the context of his comments; and he denied having a "bias bone in my body."

In his July 17 letter, Price did "sincerely apologize if I have offended anyone in my dealings in my practice or my dealings behind the badge of my role as an Assistant County Attorney."

But O'Connell wrote on Tuesday that the letter "falls far short of the unconditional apology required for you to continue employment."

Price's apology, O'Connell wrote, doesn't acknowledge that his conduct was unprofessional and inappropriate.

"Your proffered 'apology' – 'if you offended anyone'- is not an apology at all," O'Connell wrote. "It is a hollow gesture and certainly not an unconditional apology."

His termination takes effect today at 5 p.m., according to O'Connell's letter -- obtained under the Kentucky Open Records Act.

Price's troubles began when he wrote in a May 22 letter, which was first revealed by the Kentucky Trial Court Review, the Asian-American owners of Hwang's were "relying on some Asian principal" for not agreeing to settle the case.

The letter called the family "greedy foreigners who simply did not understand simple contract relations."

O'Connell reprimanded Price and ordered him to go to sensitivity training.

But a day later, O'Connell suspended Price without pay pending a review of "disturbing" conduct cited in an article by Courier-Journal reporter Andrew Wolfson.

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"That article references specific instances of conduct by you in Arraignment Court which are quite disturbing to me and this office," O'Connell wrote in a letter to Price.

The newspaper article included several examples from arraignments in April and May that show Price appearing to disparage defendants. In some of the cases, Price was admonished for the comments by a judge.

The review by the county attorney's office also turned up additional comments.

Among themt: On Jan. 28, an attorney for a defendant charged with receiving stolen property asked a judge if the person could have release from jail to go to school. Price replied, "Where do you go to school" At a pawn shop?"

In a July 10 letter to Price, Julie Hardesty, a first assistant with the county attorney's office, wrote that while many comments Price had made were "mean-spirited" and "neither funny nor appropriate," he was being given a second chance "as this office has done with other employees."

But O'Connell wrote on Tuesday that Price's July 17 letter "makes clear to me you are not willing to take that step."

In his July 17 letter, Price says he feels he has been treated unfairly, arguing that other prosecutors have been given "several second chances" and his predecessor in arraignment court said "far more outrageous" things than he did.

"When I look at this whole situation; I have not committed a crime; I have not violated the rules of professional responsibility," Price wrote, adding that he is known as a "tough" prosecutor. "I can go to bed with the level for the rest of my life because I know there are victims out there who appreciate it."

He ends his letter saying that "if there is more you want, I am prepared to accept your threat of termination if that is the wishes of the office."

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Olu Stevens should be removed from office also. He let a black armed robbery suspect go because the victim is traumatized by black men now. Go figure.
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Anna Lu · Works at Giraffe English Institute 長頸鹿美語
I am Asian-American myself and I think firing Mr Price was the wrong thing to do. Last time I checked we still had free speech and this includes the right to say anything - including controversial one-off statements.

Besides Asians are notoriously racist towards blacks - they just choose to say such statements behind closed doors. Should they be rewarded for being sneaky by being allowed to keep their jobs?
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Freedom of speech protects the individual from government arrest, it doesn't protect an individual from being fired for what they say.
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Like the pawn show..school joke.. lol.. I am sure a lot of things were broken out of context.. Tuff people always end up getting fired because of the pressure of a Soft World.. We need some people to tell it like it is...
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Looks like this time The Race Card played him. Nice.
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No one deserves to be talked down to by a prosecutor. We're all to be assumed innocent until proven guilty.

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Good riddance to a racist jerk.

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